

PressRelease

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State holds meeting to discuss new policy for residents without phone service

OLYMPIA, WA. – Staff members of the state utilities commission will hold a public meeting in Olympia on March 7 to consider new rules for local phone companies to provide service to Washington residents who are without telephones.

The hearing is scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 7 in the second-floor hearing room at the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission's headquarters, 1300 S. Evergreen Park Dr. S.W., Olympia.

The commission staff would like to hear comments from the public on whether:



there should be a price cap on telephone-line construction fees extending to unserved areas;



wireless phones would be a reasonable alternative to those who are currently phoneless;



all 23 local phone companies in the state should be required to have uniform standards for determining line-extension charges to customers;



developers should bear the cost of providing telephone lines to new areas that do not have service presently.



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Current telephone-line extension policies and hookup fees vary between the state's 23 local phone companies. In general, the charge increases with the distance the line needs to be extended to link the customers to the phone network.

There are several areas in Washington that are unable to receive phone service in Okanogan, Grant, Snohomish, Douglas, Adams, Ferry and Chelan counties.

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If members of the public would like to comment but are unable to attend the meeting, they may write to the secretary of the WUTC at P.O. Box 47250, Olympia, Wash. 98504-7250. Comments also may be sent via e-mail at the following address: comments@wutc.wa.gov. A copy of the draft rule is available at the WUTC website: www.wutc.wa.gov.

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